**Lomonosov Moscow State University**

Holidays as a reflection of the country’s history and traditions

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Ulyanova Maria



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**Introduction**

Today knowledge of any foreign language is compulsory for every person who wants to be considered educated. However, knowledge of the language is not important only as a means of communication, but also as a way of knowing different cultures. To know customs and traditions means to understand the people, their art and culture better. Holidays are part of the culture of any country.

In recent years, much has changed in our lives. But the craving of people for the holidays, the desire to somehow note in a special way this or that event has remained unchanged. We from year to year celebrate not only the traditional holidays of our country, but we try to celebrate the holidays of other peoples in our own way, not knowing the history of their occurrence. Proceeding from this, we can say that today this topic is relevant.

The purpose of this work: to systematize knowledge about the holidays of the native country and the country of the studied language - Great Britain.

Objectives of the study:

□ define the concept of "holiday", indicate its types;

□ study the calendar of holidays in Russia and the UK;

□ to identify the similarities and differences between the holidays of the home country and the UK basis of comparison;

At all times the holiday was a special event for different peoples, it was singled out among the rest of the weekdays, and it had a special significance in the life of the family, the whole society, the country. Despite the fact that all holidays are some extent diverse, many of them have something in common.

A holiday is a juxtaposition of everyday life, a favorite in the whole world pastime, moments of joy, and moments of happiness. A holiday is not only a calendar event, it’s rather a need of the soul and is relevant where it is expected.

**2. THE MOST IMPORTANT HOLIDAYS HAVING COMMON HISTORIC ROOTS IN BOTH CULTURES**

Holidays in the UK love no less than our people love. But we note that they are committed in different ways. Most holidays in Britain can rightly be called "banking." So they say, because these days officially closed all the banks, as well as British shops and other institutions. Most often, such are religious holidays, because the British are very honored **religious holidays** and be sure to celebrate them, such is English temper.

The Orthodox and Catholic Church preach the Christian religion, one of the oldest world religions. Celebrations of the **Christmas** Day and Easter in the UK and Russia have common features, common historical roots.

**2.1. The New Year’s Day and Christmas**.

The most favorite day for the British is **Christmas**, which is celebrated on **December 25**. This holiday is the most important and has a lot of its traditions. For example, for dinner, it is always customary to put a Christmas turkey and pudding on the table. And above the doorways hangs a special wreath of mistletoe. By tradition, any people standing under it must necessarily kiss each other. And why don't we have such a good tradition?

The British give each other gifts, decorate the Christmas tree, look forward to Santa Claus, listen to the Queen's speech. During the festive week they go to visit and sing sacred songs.

The celebration of **Russian Christmas** has some differences. First, in Russia, Christmas is celebrated on **January 7**. Secondly, the **main holiday** in Russia is **the** **New Year**. It is on this holiday that people give each other gifts, go to visit, listen to the president's speech and wait for Father Frost. The similarity is that for Christmas Russians sing songs that call "carols".

The tradition to celebrate **the New Year** with a Christmas tree appeared in Russia under Peter I. On January 1, the royal decree was ordered to celebrate the New Year's celebration for all Moscow residents: to light fires in the New Year's Eve, fireworks, congratulate each other, decorate houses with coniferous trees. In some families there is a tradition of baking New Year's cakes with a surprise - one puts a coin, another bakes salty, and the third one is sweet. At the New Year's table, you have to choose a cake for the chimes, and there are a lot of them on the dish. The one who will get a coin, next year will get rich, the owner of a salty pie is waiting for the test, and the sweet one is a merry, sweet life. There is a belief that the New Year should be met in new underwear, and then the disease will not stick.

**2.2. Easter**

**Easter** is a religious holiday in honor of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. As in Russia, the UK celebrates Easter; it falls from 22 to 25 April for one of these days. Many people go to church that day, and even those who don’t usually visit it at all. Easter eggs they also paint and they also exchange them. The modern traditions of celebrating Easter in England are very cheerful, bright, colorful and joyful. Easter is considered one of the most important holidays of the year. On the day of Easter at dawn, religious services are held in churches. In Catholic churches there are concerts of organ music. On this day it is customary to wear new clothes, which symbolizes the onset of spring. On Easter Monday, children are presented with sweets and toys.

This holiday came to Russia from Byzantium with baptism at the end of the 10th century. Since then, throughout Russia, this Christian holiday has been widely, beautifully and solemnly celebrated. On Easter eve in all churches all night vigils and the procession around the church are held. By this time, in all houses have already baked traditional festive pastries - cakes, which symbolize the body of Christ, and have painted eggs. And right from the morning, believers go home with a treat, giving their friend colored eggs, while saying: "Christ has been raised up!" - "Truly has been raised up!". This custom of greeting-congratulation, accompanied by hugs and kisses, was called "Christosity." The holiday of the Christian Easter lasts seven days and is called the Holy Week or the Seven.

Another holiday that is present in both cultures is **Fool's Day.**

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The festival of laughter unites all the peoples of the world! The fool's day is one of the oldest, and perhaps even the most ancient non-religious festival that the entire planet celebrates! And it is not surprising, because the love of jokes lives in people, regardless of national traditions and religious beliefs, cultural differences and social status. Laughter is happiness and everyone wants to be happy**.**

April begins with a day of fun and jokes – April Fools’ Day (*1 April*). No one really knows when this custom began but it has been kept for hundreds of years.

**April fooling became popular in England and Scotland during the 1700s.** April fool jokes usually involve persuading someone to do something silly, like looking for hen’s teeth, striped paint, a long weight, a left-handed screwdriver or some other non-existent thing. However, one **can only play April Fools on people** **before midday** – at midday the fun must stop.

One of the great April fool jokes took place on April 1st, 1957. The BBC TV programme Panorama did a documentary on “spaghetti farmers” growing “spaghetti trees”. The hoax Panorama programme featured a family from Ticino in Switzerland carrying out their annual **spaghetti harvest**. It showed women carefully plucking strands of spaghetti from a tree and laying them in the sun to dry. The joke was an enormous success. Hundreds of people believed there were such things as spaghetti trees. Soon after the broadcast ended, the BBC began to receive hundreds of calls from puzzled viewers. Did spaghetti really grow on trees, they wanted to know. Others were eager to learn how they could grow their own spaghetti tree. To this the BBC reportedly replied that they should “place a sprig of spaghetti in a tin of tomato sauce and hope for the best”.

The most touching holiday in the calendars of both states **is Mother's Day.**



It is no coincidence that a woman mother is the source of a new life, the birth of a new individual. The roots of this holiday in the UK go back to Victorian times, when children worked away from home at a rather early age, and the money earned by them was sent to the family budget. Then one day a year the children were allowed to spend their time with their parents at home. Usually they brought small gifts to mothers and grandmothers - bunches of flowers or fresh eggs. Today, British children give flowers to mothers and perform homework for them.

The initiative to establish this holiday in Russia (November 25) belongs to the State Duma Committee on Women, Family and Youth Affairs in connection with the difficult demographic situation in the country. But this holiday was closer to the people and was celebrated till now on September 21 in the Birthday of the Most Holy Theotokos.

Another general point of connection of both cultures – **MEMORY DAY (KILLED IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR) IS NOTICED ON 11 NOVEMBER**

Over the years of the First World War more than 15 million people were mobilized into the Russian army. More than six hundred thousand of them died at the front. Nearly four million were wounded: not all of these people survived until the end of the war - others remained disabled for life. Two and a half million people were taken prisoner, and how many of them died there, did not return to their homes, their loved ones.

Who remembers these people? Their children are deep old men, if they have not died yet. Grandchildren? Great-grandchildren? Let's not forget about their exploits.

**November 11**, **the British** celebrate the day of poppies, or in another way, Memorial Sunday. This is a day of remembrance for those killed in two world wars. People decorate clothes with small artificial poppies, like the way we hang the St. George ribbons. Poppies are chosen because many soldiers died on poppy fields during the war. On this day, funeral ceremonies are held everywhere, people remember their dead relatives.

**3. BORROWED HOLIDAYS**

In connection with the increased interest in learning foreign languages and in the culture (customs and traditions) of other nations, ***some holidays celebrated in Great Britain appeared and took root in our country.***

**3.1. St. Valentine's Day**

****Valentine’s Day is a time when people show feelings of love, affection and friendship. It is celebrated in many ways worldwide and falls **on February 14th**  each year. Some people take their loved ones for a romantic dinner at a restaurant while others may choose this day to propose or get married. Many people give greeting cards, chocolates, jewelry or flowers, particularly roses, to their partners or admirers on Valentine’s Day.

**Symbols**

Hearts, the colors red and pink, roses, images and statues of cupids, and cupids’ bows and arrows symbolize the feeling of romance and love on Valentine’s Day. Cupid is usually portrayed as a small winged figure with a bow and arrow. In mythology, he uses his arrow to strike the hearts of people. People who fall in love are sometimes said to be “struck by Cupid's arrow”. The day focuses on love, romance, appreciation and friendship.

* 1. **Halloween (All Saints Day is on October 31st)**

Halloween is the one of the oldest holidays still celebrated today. It's one of the most popular holidays, second only to Christmas. While millions of people celebrate Halloween without knowing its origins and myths, the history and facts of Halloween make the holiday more fascinating. Some people view Halloween as a time for fun, putting on costumes, trick-or-treating, and having theme parties. Others view it as a time of superstitions, ghosts, goblins and evil spirits that should be avoided at all costs. As the Christian debate goes on, celebrating Halloween is a preference that is not always viewed as participating in an evil holiday. Halloween is often celebrated with no reference to pagan rituals or the occult.

Halloween has its origins in the ancient Celtic festival known as Samhain (pronounced “sah-win”). The festival of Samhain is a celebration of the end of the harvest season in Gaelic culture. Samhain was a time used by the ancient pagans to take stock of supplies and prepare for winter. The ancient Gaels believed that on October 31, the boundaries between the worlds of the living and the dead overlapped and the deceased would come back to life and cause havoc such as sickness or damaged crops.

The festival would frequently involve bonfires. It is believed that the fires attracted insects to the area which attracted bats to the area. These are additional attributes of the history of Halloween.

Masks and costumes were worn in an attempt to mimic the evil spirits or appease them.



**Conclusion**

Russia is our Motherland. We need to know the history and traditions of our country. But we have so much in common with other nations and countries, which allows us to better understand each other and live in peace and harmony. Working on this project, I found it very interesting to learn about the traditions of celebrating holidays in the UK and compare them with our traditions. Holidays are reflection of the history and country’s culture, the mentality of peoples and the individual.

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